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ARMOR IN DECORATION.

SECOND PART.

BY W. L. D. O'GRADY.

ONE of the finest collections of swords in the world is in the Arsenal at Fort St. George, Madras, India. It is very rich in all the curious knives and swords of India itself, and, besides, contains the bulk of the captures in this direction from the Celestials in the first Chinese war. Hard by the narrow bamboo cage in which a gallant British colonel was barbarously dragged about the Middle Kingdom for months, is a two-handed sword eight feet long. To swing such a blade required considerable elbow-room and appreciable time. The Chinese giant who wielded it was killed by a nimble little Madras *sowar*, or horseman, who slipped in with a sudden shrewd thrust before he could be sliced in two by the ponderous machine. The little gentleman was made perpetual aide-de-camp to the Governor of Madras, and was for many years, and probably is still, conspicuous with his snowy locks and martial frame at all sorts of public and private festivities in the original seat of British power in India.

In this museum are collected vast quantities of the Moplah knives, sequestered from these turbulent, half Arab, half Hindoo, *Ma-pullays* (mother's sons) of the Malabar Coast, who have on more than one occasion broken into the well-guarded bungalows of great officials and cut them to mince meat; and thousands of sabres of all sizes and shapes taken from Mahrattas and Rohillas in the wars when Clive won his glories and the Peninsula fell to Britain under the blows of Baird and Wellesley, afterwards the "Iron Duke" of Wellington.

Nor are there wanting Persian poinards of very antique make, richly damascened with gold, but of rather poor temper, and those curious "tiger's claws" and raw handle daggers which look to be, as they are, the embodiment of Hindu treachery, the Eastern precursors of the slungshot and brass knuckles. All these weapons are kept in wooden sheaths and ground to razor sharpness. The secret of tempering the steel is not a "lost art" by any means in India, although preserved by comparatively few armorers, in spite of the *dictum* of the author of the most picturesque of American lectures; and a hunting knife made yesterday by Arnachellum of Salem, at the foot of the Shervaroy hills, will chop as clean a hole through a silver dollar as a punch, without impairing its capacity to shave a wild boar without soap. As keen a blade is that of a dagger presented to the writer's father while commanding a post far up the Irrawaddy, by a fugitive Burmese Prince, who, after nearly bringing an attack on his protectors, lost courage and absconded to be captured shortly afterwards and solemnly pounded to death in a sack, after the manner prescribed for royal Burmese offenders. He had killed his uncle with the knife now in my possession. It is quite a plain weapon with a thin coating of silver all over the wooden scabbard, and a buffalo horn handle exquisitely carved into the similitude of a Burmese devil with a truculent tail and a monstrous barb to it.

India is still—though purveyors for the esthetic and more powerful plunderers have made inroads into its treasures—a paradise for collectors of arms, as might be supposed of a land where one of the greatest of all the great and numerous festivals is the *Ayndya*. When inflamed by the rhapsodies of the Ramayana, the devotees of the sword spend days in worshipping the weapons which their ancestors won victories with, and stimulating themselves to hoped-for achievement by realistic representations of their heroic miracle plays.

Among the most envied of possessors of valuable Asiatic weapons is the Prince of Wales, and very effectively has he decorated Sandringham

with them. Of course he acquired them by way of gifts. Another fortunate collector is the late Viceroy, Lord Lytton, who, however, is regarded with angry contempt mingled with the envy inseparable from collectors engaged in the same pursuits. In point of fact, he is roundly denounced as an insatiable robber, or what we should emphatically style a bulldozer, an adept in the use of moral thumbcrews. But India is not yet exhausted even by the perquisites of the heir of the perhaps-to-be-continued monarchy

and their shapes are highly artistic. They form very effective decorations.

India is the last unworked-out mine of antique weapons. Everything of value in the way of antiques in Europe has long been catalogued, and the only chance for would-be acquirers of any of them is when the everchanging conditions of life throw collections or parts of them into the market from time to time. They have been elaborately figured independently in paintings and engravings, and form strong points of interest as accessories in the noblest works of artists.

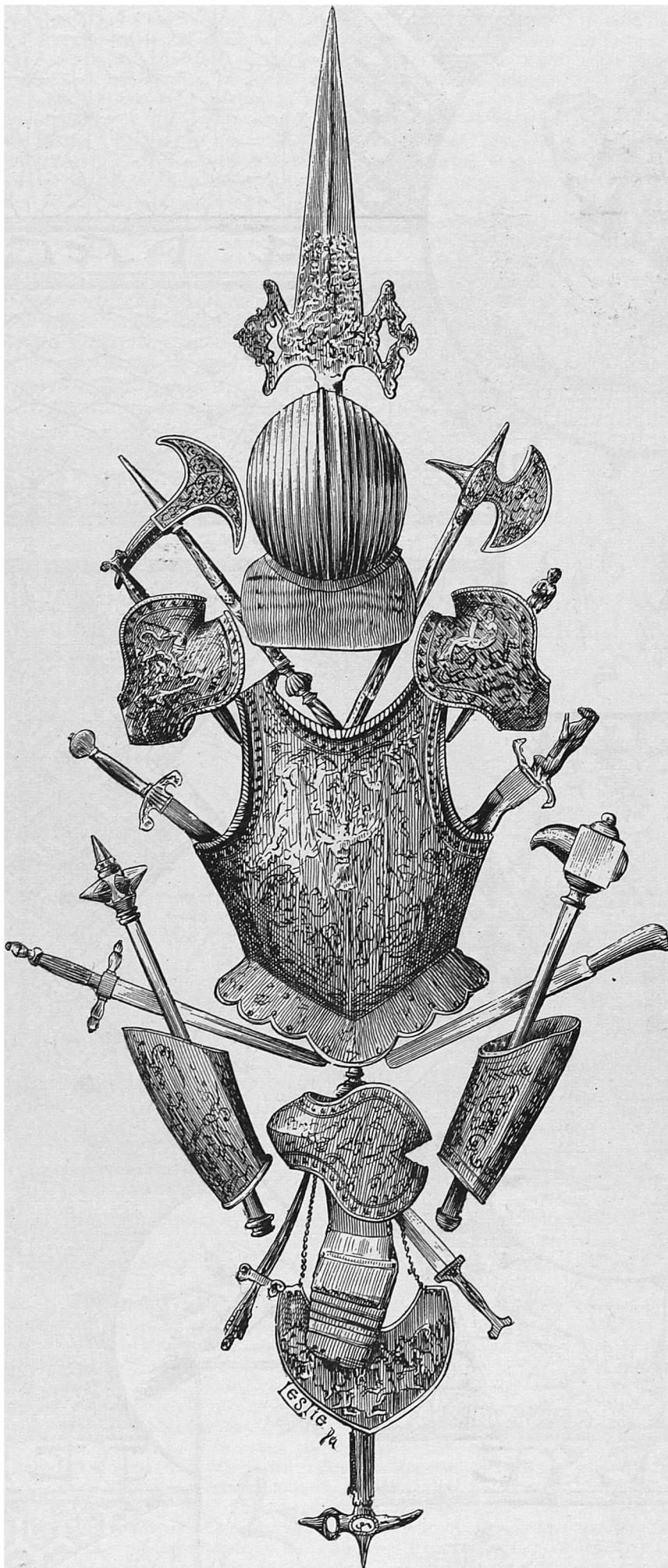
The great armory in the White Tower of the Tower of London, is probably unrivaled as an Exposition of Armor. There, in one great hall, often in the identical iron garments worn by the personages they represent, are the mounted effigies of British monarchs and great feudal barons with their heraldic bannerets displayed above them, and elsewhere are trophies of British victories in all parts of the world. Italian *ghisarmas* and battleaxes, with work creditable to a skilled jeweler abound, with Scottish pikes, fringed and tasselled halberds, still used by the yeomen of the guard, or beefeaters, in ceremonious attendance on Her Majesty on grand occasions. French cuirasses from Waterloo, yew bows and cloth-yard shafts from Crécy or Poitiers, lances, the alleged "queen of weapons," eighteen feet long, with ponderous elbow guards, light ash poles from the Polish horse of Napoleon, bamboo-handled shafts from India. There are Zulu *assegais* from the Cape, and Spanish *cuchillos* and Andalusian *navajas* to be compared with ancient whingers. Dudgeon daggers, Dutch *snickersees* and Norman *misericordes*, so called because no mercy was ever shown with them.

There are court swords of the times of Elizabeth, the Stuarts, and the tiny cheesetoasters of the Macaronis of Queen Anne's days, and those of the Georges; there are the curved sabres of British generals and the straight rapiers of French marshals, like the swords of American generals and sergeants. There are the swords of famous printers, when those craftsmen were the only ones permitted to wear the distinguishing badge of gentlemen. There are the morions of Cromwell's Ironsides and the battered head pieces of Sikh chiefs with the curious sharp-edged quoits used in war by them encircling the crowns. In firearms there are examples of the earliest hand guns, wheellocks, matchlocks, and flintlocks, and even archaic revolvers. Altogether the collection is highly interesting and beautifully arranged.

Another famous display of exquisitely arrayed arms is in the great guardroom at Hampton Court Palace, a very handsome apartment, too good, one would think, for the occupation of rude soldiery, as that perfect gentleman Evelyn remarked, in his famous diary, of another Armory Hall in Rome, which he described as fit for a prince, but used only by giant Switzers who did nothing therein but drink and play cards.

While nothing in its way can surpass the decoration of these great halls, their imitation is not to be recommended to the average householder, but hints may be taken from them as to the disposition of a more modest arsenal within his control. A few choice weapons would not be out of place in juxtaposition to the chastest of Japanese plaques in the most charming of parlors. To enjoy arms

and decorate one's rooms with them demands cultured intelligence and artistic taste, far above the average capacity of the mechanical paper hanger, and their decorative effect as far surpasses the mechanical products of factories as do ancient hand embroidered tapestries the machine-made materials which give an artificially antique air to so many newly-furnished rooms. Genuine-ness is something to be desired, and as Birmingham is still a busy place, it may be well to keep a weather-eye open for possible bogus antiques kindly provided by the manufacturers of modern idols for export.



A SECOND SUGGESTION FOR ARRANGEMENT OF ARMS.

of Great Britain, or the gifts tendered to its latest representative out there. There is still Balm in Gilead, and New York is not without some admirable specimens of Afghan, Persian, and Hindustanee cutlery, to say nothing of some remarkable conceptions in the way of horse pistols, and blunderbusses. Strange, however, as some of these firearms may appear to our eyes, their owners are, many of them, famous shots, and the long-barrelled Cabuli *jezail* has proved almost equal to a rifle at short range and infinitely superior to the large calibered muskets which first opposed it. All are richly carved and inlaid,